At present there is no proposal for import of coconut oil during 1992-93 for Public Distribution System.

Bridge Over Kanhar River

897. SHRI RAM NIHOR RAI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the scheme for construction of bridge on Kanhar River linking Sonbhadra-Mirzapur with Madhya Pradesh-Bihar has been pending for finalisation for the last several years;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay; and

(c) the time by which the work on this bridge is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c). The Govt. of India are constitutionally responsible for maintenance and development of roads declared as national Highways. The proposed bridge over river Kanhar, when constructed, would fall on a State Road. As such its construction essentially vests with the concerned State Government.

[*English*]

Import of Almonds from USA

898. PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the trade agreement signed with USA for import of almonds;

(b) whether the Government are aware that licence for import of almonds given to dry fuit importers are sold at a premium in the country; and

(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). In may 1988, a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding was signed between USA and India on import of almonds. the main elements of this Understanding were that the global import authorization of almonds by India for shelled and unshelled almonds was set at US $ 20 million annually for the three year period 1988-91. The minimum value of licences was to be increased to Rs. 20,000/-. The Govt. of India agreed that notwithstanding the provisions of any export obligation, the issue of import authorisation of almonds would be maintained at the aforementioned levels. For the period 1991-1994, almonds would be placed on OGL, if the balance-of-payment position improved to such an extent that the foreign exchange reserves provided for 6 months of imports. If the BOP position continued to be unsatisfactory, the import authorization at a level of US $ 20 million would continue. Before March 31, 1994 consultations would be held for the purpose of agreeing on annual import authorization levels for almonds for subsequent periods. These consultations would be based on an assessment of India's external reserves and overall balance-of-payments position. As part of GATT Article XXVIII negotiations, Government of India also agreed to bind its tariffs on almonds at the levels of Rs. 50/- per Kg. for shelled almonds and Rs. 28/- per Kg. for unshelled almonds.

In terms of Para 166 of the current Import Policy, as announced on 30.3.1990, import licences could be obtained by the eligible importers of dry fruits to the extent of 25% of the c.i.f. value of best year's import in respect of dry fruits (excluding Cashew nuts and dates) during any of the financial years, from 1972-73 onwards subject to a minimum of Rs. 20,000/-. In addition, each eligible dry fruit licence could also get separate licence

for import of almonds only for a value of Rs. 20,000/- irrespective of the value of dry fruit licences. The issue of dry fruits and almonds licences would be subject to evidence of having made exports to the extent of the entire value of the licences issued during the previous licensing year. However, this provision for grant of import licences for dry fruits and almonds was delected *vide* Public Notice No. 143-ITC (PN)/90-93 dated 28.3.1991. On a review of the policy, with effect from 20.9.1991, its was decided to grant Special Licence, subject to a maximum of Rupee equivalent to US $ 1300 during 1991-92 to all those who obtained licences for import of almonds in 1990-92 in terms of the provision in Para 166 of the Policy and fulfilled the export obligation in respect of such licences. These licences are not transferable or saleable. The Government is not aware of any violation of this policy through sale of such licenses.

Construction of Varapuzha Bridge in Cochin

899. PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the acquisition procedure for the land for construction of bridge on national Highway No. 17 at Varapuzha in Ernakulam district of Kerala has been completed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total expenditure likely to be incurred on this project; and

(d) the time by which the construction work is proposed to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Land acquisition for the constriction of Varapuzha bridge and its approaches has not yet been completed.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 24.43 crores. Since land acquisition is still in progress, it is too early to indicate the time by which construction work is likely to start.

[*Translation*]

Permanent Residences for Army Personnel in Kota Cantonment

900. SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the army cantonments in Rajasthan where temporary and permanent residences are built for the Army personnel;

(b) whether any temporary arrangement have been made for the regiment in Kota Cantonment;

(c) whether some cantonment land has been let out for residential purposes;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government propose to build permanent residences for army personnel in these catonments;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) to (g). In Cantonment/Military Stations, permanent accommodation is normally built for Army Person-